

Rep. Allen West (R-Fla.) criticized the economic record of his party's last president on Sunday, saying George W. Bush's administration was not committed enough to limiting government.

"He grew government. And he increased the government's spending," the freshman congressman, a Tea Party favorite, said on "Fox News Sunday."

"And, so, you cannot have a cut in taxes and also have a gross enlargement of government. That's one of the things we don't want to see happen," West added.

The tax cuts that Bush signed into law early in his presidency continue to be debated, with Republicans calling for them to be made permanent at all income levels and Democrats wanting to raise rates at the highest income levels.

West and Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Md.), his sparring partner on the Sunday show, both said that policymakers should look for ways to eliminate waste within the government.

But they sharply disagreed about whether new tax revenue, possibly from a reform of the tax code, would be used to find a bipartisan agreement on reducing deficits.

Edwards, who voted for a measure last week that would have sped up the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, signaled that Republicans needed to expand what they will put on the table for deficit reduction.

"The fact is that you cannot have two wars that are on the books that are unpaid for, tax breaks that are unpaid for for the wealthiest Americans and at the same time say that we're going to balance our budget off the backs of seniors," said

Edwards, who has been sharply critical of the GOP plan to overhaul Medicare..

For his part, West said he is on record calling for the elimination of tax breaks.

But, he added: "Until we show that we're willing to be fiscally responsible up here, why should we continue to tax Americans, why should we continue to take away their most precious resource, if we're not going to do the right things up here?"